



# Jewish Federation OF GREATER HOUSTON

April 17 PM - JRAN Email

Dear JRAN Community:

Today, we will cover the Governor's press conference, Bob Harvey's update from the Greater Houston Partnership and the Texas Medical Center, and Mayor Turner's press conference.

## **Strike Force to Open Texas**

Governor Abbot announced the newly developed "[Strike Force to Open Texas](#)" during his press conference today. Here is a breakdown of what was announced:

- Over 1 million people have filed for unemployment during the COVID19 pandemic
- The new executive order continues to maintain the same [federally established social distancing guidelines](#)
- The Strike Force will (among other things):
  - Make recommendations to safely and strategically re-open the Texas economy and ease restrictions
  - Collaborate with medical professionals
  - How to re-open key Texas institutions (workforce, education, health care, energy, infrastructure, arts, culture, and entertainment)
  - Spur economic growth for small businesses and rural communities
  - Have a Chief Operating Officer to staff the Strike Force and establish the following working groups:
    - Workforce, Economic Development, and International Trade; Education; Fiscal Accountability; Energy; Arts, Culture, and Entertainment; Health Care Systems; Infrastructure; and Emergency Management and Supply Chain
  - Have Chief Medical Advisors

Mayor Turner announced today that he is looking at the Governor's order and will assess what is best for Houston.

The Governor established a new timeline for opening the Texas economy (and I added Houston's orders as well):

- April 17<sup>th</sup>
  - Establishment of the Strike Force
  - Schools closed for remainder of 2019-2020 school year: public, private, and higher education closed, information on schools can be found from the [Texas Education Agency's COVID19 website](#)
    - The Governor mentioned that his office will be in touch about how to approach summer instruction but did not specify if that will be online or in-person and he did not mention what "school year" means. If we go with the academic calendars, here are two from Texas' largest school districts and the Teachers Union timeline:
      - [HISD's 2019-2020 academic calendar](#) goes through June 30<sup>th</sup>

- [Dallas Independent School district](#) goes through July 31<sup>st</sup>
    - Yesterday, the Texas chapter of the American Federation of Teachers [asked the Governor to close schools for the remainder of the school year](#) in order to allow districts to plan for a safe reopening for fall 2020
    - During today's press conference, Mayor Turner said that HISD will remain closed for the rest of the academic year and he hopes teachers can return to full classes in the fall
  - City of Houston parks to remain open but still need to be socially distant
    - Parking lots closed to encourage only those nearby to walk to the parks
    - Gated parks will remain closed
    - Can visit neighborhood parks
- April 20<sup>th</sup>
  - All state parks to reopen; strict guidelines on social distancing, must wear a face mask, cannot congregate more than 5 people
- April 21<sup>st</sup>
  - March 22<sup>nd</sup> executive order to preserve personal protective equipment (PPE) to expire
  - [New executive order](#) still requires all licensed medical professionals to postpone nonessential surgeries and medical procedures through May 8<sup>th</sup>
  - Exemptions to the executive order:
    - Can do procedures that do not deplete hospital capacity or PPE needed for treatment of COVID19
    - Surgeries or procedures performed by licensed health care facilities may proceed so long as 25% of hospital capacity is reserved for COVID19 treatment and the facility can privately procure PPE
- April 24<sup>th</sup>
  - **Retail-to-go:** retail operations can offer pick-up and delivery services but retailers must adhere to the [Texas Department of State Health Services guidelines](#). Employees must:
    - Be trained in cleaning, hygiene and respiratory practices
    - Be screened for symptoms
    - Wear face coverings
    - Maintain 6 feet between employees
  - **Schools:** Teachers and staff may go to classrooms to retrieve supplies for remote teaching and clean out classrooms
- April 30<sup>th</sup>
  - Executive Order for retail-to-go to expire and is not expected to be extended as is, Strike Force to look at new Executive Order to replace that considers ways to safely reopen the economy
- May 8<sup>th</sup>
  - Executive order on restricting medical procedures expires
- May 31<sup>st</sup>
  - City of Houston orders to expire



### **Greater Houston Partnership Update (including results from the Texas Medical Center)**

Yesterday, the Greater Houston Partnership (GHP) held its [weekly President's report](#) with Bob Harvey. During the report, he gave an update from the Texas Medical Center (TMC) regarding COVID19 rates within the 9 county region of Greater Houston. Here is a breakdown of the update:

- The Federal CARES Act is almost out of funds but we expect a COVID 4 stimulus package next week
- Unemployment rates in Houston continue to climb, currently at 180,000 claims
  - Global GDP is expected to fall by 30%
  - Bob Harvey mentioned that we should expect a [recession like that in the mid-1980's](#), but in a matter of months instead of years
  - Hospitality industry is hardest hit
  - GHP has launched the [#stayhomeHouston campaign](#) with local celebrities
- TMC is reporting that [COVID19 reports are starting to ease](#)
  - Mayor Turner stated today that the curve is easing but we have not reached the peak
  - In March we saw COVID19 infections increase about 7 times each week, early April it increased about 2.5 times each week, now the increase is about 2 times per week
  - Past two weeks, we have seen a trend downward in COVID19 positive and Persons Under Investigation (PUI = people who are symptomatic but not tested)
  - TMC and hospital affiliates are within their capacity, PPE supplies are within capacity, need more testing kits
  - COVID19 cases account for 23% of ICU beds in the Houston area, 39% are non-COVID19 related, and 23% are unoccupied
- GHP has a [business recovery website](#) set up, it includes a lot of information for business owners

### **Update from Mayor Turner**

During today's press conference, Mayor Turner announced that he will appoint a local leader to oversee the City of Houston's recovery efforts on Monday. Dr. Persse announced that there were over 100 new cases today, indicates a flattening of the curve but not a decline. More deaths to report, but all with underlying conditions and most elderly.

- Need to continue social distancing in order to keep the trend flat or declining
- Need rapid testing, current wait is 6 days for results
- Need widespread ubiquitous testing for the whole Greater Houston area

Mayor Turner ended by announcing he will be "booging down" to a virtual high school prom— watch out kids!

**In other news...(volume up, ear buds in!)**

Let's end Friday with a [fun music video of The Beatles' "I Feel Fine"](#)...but in Yiddish! Jewish acapella group ListenUp! recorded a Zoom-style music video, because that's what we do these days. If Yiddish isn't your speed, you can watch fellow member of the tribe, [Josh Gad, sing Disney's "Gaston" with friends](#)...also Zoom-style. I need to get a giant frame for my future Zoom calls...

I hope everyone enjoys my random stories at the end of the Jran emails...and I've learned the hard way that you mention a [picnic table for squirrels](#) ONE TIME and you are forever a "squirrel person." However, I would love to highlight what you all are doing to uplift our community. [Send me your stories](#) and I'll feature them in future emails. Until then, enjoy the music videos!

Shabbat shalom,

Jackie

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